



**The California State University English
Placement Test and Entry Level Mathematics
Test Validity Studies**

Prepared by
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Executive Summary

EPT Validity Study

The 2008-2009 English Placement Test (EPT) validity study was conducted to evaluate the use of the EPT cutscore of 151 for placing freshman students into various levels of California State University (CSU) English courses. The appropriateness of the EPT cutscore was assessed in relation to students' performance in their freshman level English courses as measured by pass rates and end-of-course grades. Moreover, the appropriateness of the cutscore was assessed by asking course instructors to evaluate whether their students had been placed in the right level of English coursework. In addition, the interrelationships between students' EPT scores and their scores on the SAT Critical Reading and Writing tests, their scores on the ACT English test, and their exemption status reported on the Early Assessment Program (EAP) English test were investigated in attempt to validate the use of these tests for exempting students from taking the EPT.

Selected sections from the highest level of pre-baccalaureate courses and lowest level of baccalaureate courses from all 23 of the CSU campuses participated in this study. The total validation sample included 53,497 college freshmen. Of these, 26,821 had EPT scores, 34,950 had final grades in English courses, 1,935 had ratings provided by instructors on the appropriateness of their placement, and 15,791 had taken the EAP-English test.

Findings support the validity of using an EPT cutscore of 151 to place students into freshman level baccalaureate English courses. Results indicate that performance on the EPT is associated with success in freshman level English courses. More specifically, students who scored higher on the EPT tended to have better grades and higher course pass rates; this is true for students placed into both baccalaureate and pre-baccalaureate courses. Analyses also show

that students placed in baccalaureate courses with EPT scores between 147 and 150 appeared to be successful in their coursework. In addition, instructors indicated that the majority of students had been appropriately placed in both baccalaureate and pre-baccalaureate courses.

Results also support the validity of using students' SAT and ACT scores, as well as students' exemption status as reported on the EAP-English test, to exempt them from taking the EPT. Students' EPT scores were found to be highly correlated with their SAT Critical Reading and Writing scores as well as their ACT English scores. Congruently, EAP-English exemption classifications were found to discriminate among students who differed in their level of English skills as defined by the EPT, SAT, and ACT.

ELM Validity Study

The 2008-2009 Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) validity study was conducted to evaluate the use of the ELM cutscore of 50 for placing freshman students into various levels of CSU mathematics courses. The appropriateness of this cutscore was assessed in relation to students' performance in their freshman level mathematics courses as measured by pass rates and end-of-course grades. Moreover, the appropriateness of the cutscore was assessed by asking course instructors to evaluate whether their students had been placed in the right level of mathematics coursework. In addition, the interrelationships between students' ELM scores and their scores on the SAT Mathematics test, their scores on the ACT Mathematics test, and their exemption status as reported on either one of the two EAP Mathematics tests (i.e., the EAP-Algebra II test or the EAP-Summative High School Mathematics test) were examined in attempt to validate the use of these measures for exempting students from taking the ELM.

Selected sections from the highest level of pre-baccalaureate courses and lowest level of baccalaureate courses from all 23 of the CSU campuses participated in this study. The total validation sample included 53,497 college freshmen. Of these, 24,622 had ELM scores, 35,761 had final grades in mathematics courses, 2,186 had ratings provided by instructors on the appropriateness of their placement, and 11,184 had taken an EAP mathematics test.

Findings support the validity of using the ELM cutscore of 50 to place students into freshman level baccalaureate mathematics courses. Results indicate that higher student performance on the ELM is associated with greater probability of obtaining grades of A or B in freshman level math courses. In addition, instructors indicated that the majority of students had been appropriately placed in both baccalaureate and pre-baccalaureate courses.

Results also support the validity of using a student's SAT and ACT mathematics score or a student's EAP mathematics exemption status to exempt the student from taking the ELM. Students' ELM scores were found to be highly correlated with their SAT and ACT mathematics scores, and EAP mathematics exemption classifications were found to discriminate among students who differed in their level of Mathematics skills as defined by the ELM, SAT, and ACT.